



Murphy Initiative for Justice and Peace

P. Francis Murphy Justice/Peace Initiative, Inc.

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Benjamin Civiletti, Chairman
Commission on Capital Punishment
750 E. Pratt Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Mr. Civiletti:

On behalf of the Baltimore based Murphy Initiative for Justice and Peace, I wish to extend our sincere gratitude to you and the members of the Maryland Commission on Capital Punishment. Your dedicated work to the critical issue of capital punishment is a service, not only to the State of Maryland, but to all the other states that are struggling with this same issue.

I attended two public hearings thus far, as did other members of the Murphy Initiative, and I was greatly impressed by the Commission's focused, intense and respectful listening to the hours of high quality testimony by expert witnesses and to the testimony of members of the public.

Of all the testimonies placed before us, those who spoke from their personal experience, David Kaczynski, Bill Babbitt and Jennifer Thompson brought most clarity to the legal and moral implications of the death penalty. Their testimony makes the case that statistics and their analysis, while important, are many steps removed from the heart of the matter, the human condition and what best serves life. Capital punishment, consciously or not, serves revenge, not justice, not life.

Human sciences reveal that our actions are goal oriented, meant to satisfy our needs, real or perceived, legitimate or not. Violence, most often, is the result of unmet real needs. The time, effort and resources expended on serving a death sentence, would better serve justice and humanity by providing for people's real needs: affordable housing, decent work, adequate health care and good education. Finally we will never eliminate all violent crimes, with or without capital punishment, but neither will the Commission be able to fulfill its mandate "to make recommendations concerning the application and administration of capital punishment in the state so that they are free from bias and error and achieve fairness and accuracy". So since we are always capable of error, let us seek to err on the side of life, not death. Repeal the death penalty, please.

Sincerely,

Sister Diane Bardol, GNSH

Becoming a common voice for justice and peace